

**IF ONLY WE
KNEW
WHAT WE
KNOW**

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Topics

- 1. Why the traditional ways of generating (project management) knowledge are inadequate?**
- 2. Why successful practitioners are the best source for useful and current knowledge?**
- 3. What do we hope to accomplish today and tomorrow?**

Many “researchers”:

- **Do not conduct descriptive studies**
- **Do not get out into the field**
- **Do not collect firsthand data**

**They attempt to prescribe
how project managers should
manage...**

**Before they have a sound
understanding of how they actually
manage.**

“Management scientists simply do not sufficiently understand the constraint of time on decision making...

Their techniques are so time consuming to use that managers pass them by.

Management scientists need to get out of their relatively unpressured worlds and experience the impact of time on the decision-making process...”

Grayson, C.J., (1973) “Management Science and Business Practice,” Harvard Business Review, July-August, 41-48.

Many “researchers” do not have a deep acquaintance with the phenomena under study.

**Example:
Factors affecting the size of the
construction crew**

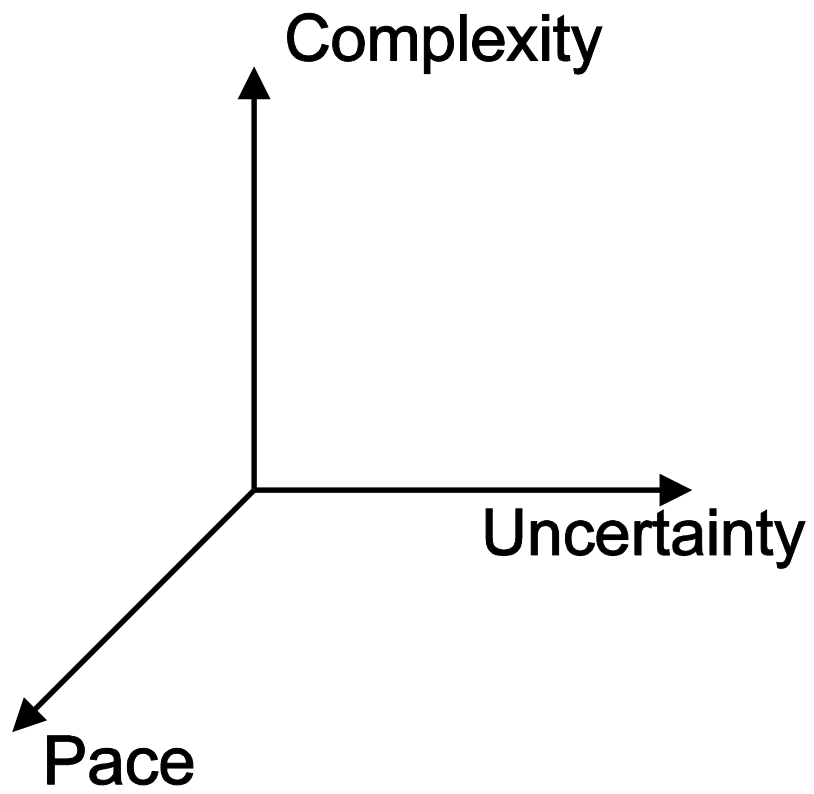
- **Worker’s training**
- **Worker’s experience**
- **Foreman’s training**
- **Quality of plans**
- **Complexity of work**
- **etc.**

The size of the pickup truck...

Many researchers ignore the “context is the key” rule, and develop “one best way” tools.

Context Factors

- **External environment**
- **Objectives and constraints**
- **Tasks**
- **Organization and human resources**



The UCP Model

**Research objectivity is a myth.
Scientists are not free of bias,
opinion, or conviction.**

***“The Subjective Side of Science,”
Ian Mitroff, 1974***

Research Deficiencies

- **Lack of descriptive research**
- **Lack of deep familiarity**
- **Lack of attention to context**
- **Timing**

“Corporate Knowledge”

Deficiencies

- **All of the above**
- **Biases**
- **More**

2. Why successful practitioners are the best source for useful and current knowledge?

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is the continuous testing and transformation of experience into shared knowledge that the organization accesses and uses to achieve its core purpose.

Definitions

Data

A set of discrete, objective facts about events.

Information

- **Patterns in the data.**
- **Data that makes a difference in the receiver's outlook or insight.**
- **A message.**

Knowledge

- **It is high value form of information that is ready to apply to decisions and actions, (actionable information).**
- **Knowledge is information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection.**

Explicit and Tacit Knowledge

**Competent Practitioners
Usually Know More Than
They Can Tell**

Explicit (codified) knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and shared in the form of:

- **Data**
- **Scientific formula**
- **Specifications**
- **Policy manuals**

Explicit knowledge can be transferred economically.

Tacit (uncodified) knowledge is highly personal, hard to formalize, and difficult to articulate in a way that is meaningful and complete.

Tacit knowledge includes:

- **Know-how**
- **Judgment**
- **Intuition**
- **Rules-of thumb**

The dissemination of tacit knowledge is slow and costly.

Managing projects requires an integrated approach

Managing by information

- Planning.
- Communication.
- Measurement, evaluation, control.

Managing through people

- Leading.
- Networking.
- Team-building.

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Managing action

- Making intuition-based decisions.
- Taking judgment-based actions.
- Getting out of the office.

Learning and *Un*learning

Hints for Successful Project Management

Personal

- Stay out of details. Your job is the forest not the trees.
- Be There, be Available.
- Support team.
- Be clear on expectations.
- Look for learning opportunities for yourself and for the team.
- You succeed to the extent your team succeeds. Be sure credit goes where it belongs.
- Own failures – don't let external forces “punish” team members. Absorb it yourself. It goes with the turf.
- Don't be Mr. Project Manager, be willing to get dirty, to laugh at yourself, to admit your screw-ups. Being superman will kill you.
- If you don't understand something – ask!

People

- Establish clear boundaries (not details of how to do work).
- Give authority to execute.
- Allow people to fail – help them to grow through failures.

- Take risks with people – put people in jobs that stretch them.
- Don't under staff, don't nickel and dime.
- Select people carefully – particularly for key positions.
- No team, project, job, person, etc., is perfect – if it were, what would your job be.

Awareness

- Look for signals that indicate status – cleanliness, behavior, relationships.
- If you think something is wrong – it is.
- Experience your job in depth so that you know if your data is valid.

Decisiveness

- Don't be hesitant or afraid to make drastic changes – bad situations don't get better on their own.
- Always look for 80 for 20, know when it's enough.
- Time your decisions, interventions. Know when the critical mass has been reached.

L. Ray Longino, P&G
August 18, 1994

NINETY-NINE RULES
FOR MANAGING
“FASTER, BETTER, CHEAPER”
PROJECTS

18. Often, in order to do it quickly and right, the project team must be willing to do it wrong first. When information concerning “what to do” is missing, **prototyping** is an efficient way to acquire the missing information...

19. When information concerning “how to do” is missing, **small experiments** are efficient ways to acquire the missing information...



The “Learning Through Stories” project

- **Thirty five practicing project managers**
- **Nomination based on “proven” record of success**
- **Identify meaningful project experiences**
- **Document these experiences in the form of short stories**

Preliminary findings of the 70 stories indicate **nine patterns** of behavior

The **three** central qualities exemplified by these project leaders are:

- **Championship**
- **Flexibility**
- **Collaboration**

- 1. Adopt a Will to Win**
- 2. Challenge the Status Quo**
- 3. Take Measured Risks**

- 4. Foster Flexible Systems and Behavior**
- 5. Legitimize Judgment-Based Decisions**
- 6. Create and Maintain a Focus**

- 7. Involve the Customer**
- 8. Develop Teamwork**
- 9. Build Trust**

A shift from management to leadership

3. What do we hope to accomplish today and tomorrow?

Participant Feedback

1. I was exposed to new ideas/tools.

- Maybe you will *unlearn* something new
- Eliminating habits, practices, and assumptions that once worked.
- Change is less about understanding new things, it is more about seeing old things with new eyes, from different perspectives.
- It is not about reengineering or reinventing, it is about reconceiving. Do that, and creativity will flood your mind.

Fast Company, July/August, 1999

3. I developed new professional relationships.

New Roles

- **Knowledge sellers**
- **Knowledge buyers (seekers)**
- **Knowledge brokers**

New Systems

- **Knowledge markets**
- **“Yellow pages”**

10. The program, the organization, and the environment fostered productive sharing of information and knowledge.

Discussion Vs Dialogue

Discussion	Dialogue
Knowing	Finding out
Answers	Questions
Winning or losing	Sharing
Proving a point; Defending a position	Listening; exploring new possibilities

Forum Vision

(An article from
Government Executive,
October **2002**)

NASA's Forum of Master Project Managers Receives the "Innovations in American Government" Award

...Last month, the Ford Foundation's National Selection Committee announced that NASA's Forum of Master Project Managers (FMPM) will receive the "Innovations in America" Award...

...In its decision to grant FMPM the award, the National Selection Committee said that the FMPM has achieved outstanding results in...

- Generating knowledge...**
- Sharing knowledge within NASA ...**
- Transferring NASA's project management knowledge to industry...**

...In a special reception following the award ceremony, NASA Administrator Mr. Daniel Goldin said: “The remarkable achievements of the Forum have proven that if NASA knew what NASA knows we would be three times safer, faster... In less than two years we will be there...”